

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
May 16, 2017

Getting Coaled Feet

A proposed coal terminal in Plaquemines Parish is coming into conflict with the Coastal Master Plan, leading to questions about the future of a major restoration project in the Plan. In addition to the [proposed terminal](#), the new facility, owned by Ram Terminals, would include a railroad line, multistory office building, and a large maintenance shop. The project has been [permitted by the Army Corps of Engineers](#) since 2014, but Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources is having a much harder time pushing it through, mostly because the proposal would intersect with one of the largest projects proposed in the Coastal Master Plan, the [Mid-Barataria sediment diversion](#), which [aims to move water and sediment](#) into Barataria Bay and rebuild marshland. RAM Terminals first applied to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for a coastal-use permit in 2012, but the decision to grant the permit was [overruled by a judge](#) who felt that the DNR should take a second look at alternative sites, in light of [complaints](#) from indigenous groups, local residents, and environmental groups. In April of last year, the permit was [revived and then reconsidered](#), amid controversy over whether the terminal should be able to be built at all.

The state currently has a [memorandum of understanding](#) with Ram where the state would allow the company to continue its preparations until Louisiana lets them know they are ready to open the Mid-Barataria, so long as Ram agrees to pay a daily fine, capped at \$1.9 million a year, for holding them up once they want them to get their [ugly, yella, no-good keisters](#) off (technically, not) their property. [Some think](#) that compromising a little effectiveness might be OK, if we can keep the economy rolling by inviting industry. Others think it is a sign of troubling conflicts to come between coastal restoration priorities and industry growth. That time may be coming sooner than expected, as the Mid-Barataria has been [approved by the Feds](#) for a quicker permitting process.

I'll Take Tap With That

We here at Chateau D'Eau are historically fond of giving [side eye](#) to bottled water, but even the strongest among us have been forced to guzzle down a bottle or two when faced with no other options. A [study out of Britain](#) says we're not the only ones. After finding that [sales of bottled water were disproportionately high](#) in the country, an environmental non-

The Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[Freshwater Bayou Marsh Restoration](#)

Pecan Island, LA

May 26, 27, 2017

[St. Bernard Coastal Panel](#)

Meraux, LA

June 1, 2017

[One Water Summit](#)

New Orleans, LA

June 27-29, 2017

Water jobs:

[Water Law & Policy Fellow](#)

UC Berkeley School of Law

Berkeley, CA

[Senior Manager \(State Policy\)](#)

Ceres

Boston, MA

[Vice President & Executive Director](#)

Audubon Society

New Orleans, LA

[Water Scarcity & Markets Strategy Director](#)

The Nature Conservancy

Washington, DC

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor

New Orleans, LA 70118

504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](https://twitter.com/TulaneWaterLaw)

profit partnered with Brita (the filter folks, so, ya know, there's potentially an angle here) and found that 71% of consumers felt all sorts of awkward asking for a glass of tap water and over a third got [the willies](#) about using a reusable water bottle at their favorite restaurants or stores. It also found that only about 10% of folks knew that they had a right to ask for tap water at no cost, even if they had to pay for the glass it came in. It all feels very British.

But, what about here in the good ole US of A? Well, OSHA requires that your employer provide you potable water at work, and some states require that restaurants and bars at least have some potable water source to get a liquor license, but the public right to water isn't as clearly defined on a national level. At any rate, whether they have to or not, there are upwards of two millions tons of single use plastic bottles used each year, and [only 6.6% are recycled](#). Not to mention [the impact of pumping groundwater](#) on water supplies and ecosystem health. On the other hand, water contamination and rising prices to fix the same may make businesses less likely to dish it out for free. This may mean we'll have to step up our investment into clean water, or just start [buying it all from New Yorkers](#). In the meantime, our take is it doesn't hurt to ask.

The Future is Blue

University of Houston [scientists have discovered](#) a new way to turn water into a renewable energy source. Hydrogen is a highly efficient and totally renewable way to produce energy. It is easier and cheaper to store and ship than many fuels and could bring energy resources to remote places where it is difficult to use traditional electricity. Unfortunately, hydrogen doesn't exist here on earth as a gas, and so in order to be useful it must be separated from other compounds, most notably, our friend H₂O. These scientists have made water splitting (that's its technical term) a little bit easier by inventing a new catalyst that lasts much longer than the older ones – previously, they could only run for about an hour, whereas this one can run up to 20 hours at a time. And, this could make hydrogen an [even better energy source](#) since there will be less need to use methane gas or other climate damaging gasses. Talk about hydropower.

When In Rome... or Greece... or Croatia

It's getting steamy down here in the Big Easy. As the weather gets warmer, we'll all start thinking of places a little cooler. Escaping the heat can be pricy and getting time off hard. Plus, you'd have to miss all the fun here! Instead, check out this [photo piece](#) from the New York Times highlighting ten of the most beautiful rivers, lakes and coastlines in Europe. It's perfect for easing that summertime wanderlust until you can make it there for real.